



Meeting note

Project name	Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Assets
File reference	EN020028
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	22 August 2024
Meeting with	Morgan Offshore Wind Limited and Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Limited
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Project overview

The Applicant provided an overview of the Proposed Development. The Applicant explained that the Development Consent Order (DCO) application is for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of two independent electrical transmission systems to connect the Morgan Offshore Wind Project and the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm to the National Grid substation at Penwortham.

The Applicant provided an overview of the works areas of the Proposed Development which includes:

- Offshore export cables – aligned routes;
- Landfall – aligned routes and overlapping works areas at the last section of offshore cables;
- Onshore export cables – centreline with some diversions;
- River Ribble crossing;
- will be trenchless crossing underneath the river;
- Separate 400kv connections to the National Grid for both offshore wind projects;
- Mitigation/ enhancement only areas; &
- Biodiversity benefit only areas.

The Applicant explained that it has multiple construction scenarios including construction taking place for both transmission assets at the same time or sequentially, and sequentially with up to four years between projects.

The Applicant stated that it has multiple offshore export cable corridors on the exit from the Morgan array area. The Applicant explained that the Applicants will be seeking the rights to install onshore export cables within Blackpool Road Recreation Ground, and this will be defined in the final application.

The Inspectorate asked for clarification regarding the approach to construction in overlapping rights areas. The Applicant explained that the offshore wind farms are electrically separate and consequently are not proposing any commitments for one developer to undertake works for the other developer.

The Inspectorate asked for an update on the Applicant's discussions with Blackpool Airport. The Applicant stated that it is in regular discussions with the airport regarding construction, operation and maintenance constraints and for obtaining Ground Investigation (GI) information. It will continue to hold discussions and will continue to work to agree positions.

The Inspectorate asked whether the project is seeking to extend the National Grid Penwortham substation. The Applicant confirmed that any works that might be needed for the substation will not be included in this application and it explained that the broad area has been included due to range of constraints.

Draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) approach

The Applicant explained the structure of the dDCO, including that it has been drafted to allow both projects to come forward separately. It stated that the requirements for the two offshore wind farm projects will be in separate schedules but the wording will be identical where applicable, at submission. There will be four Deemed Marine Licences (DML), two per project, for both the offshore elements and the River Ribble crossing. The Applicant explained that it consulted on the dDCO and it has received no objections.

The Applicant stated that the Explanatory Memorandum will fully explain the approach to drafting as well as the application of precedent and why it is relevant to the projects.

The Applicant explained that during Examination the DCO Requirements and DML conditions for the two projects may diverge if and where necessary. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider how best to support the ExA and interested parties in understanding and tracking any divergence that arises during the Examination and bring clarity to its submissions during the Examination.

Lands update

The Applicant explained that it is continuing to engage with landowners and occupiers in regards to Heads of Terms and options. The Applicant stated that it has made amendments to the Order Limits following feedback. Pre-application trenching has concluded. The Applicant is negotiating protective provisions with statutory undertakers.

The Applicant stated that there is Special Category land and open space within the Order Limits. It is in discussions with the Crown Estate. The Inspectorate advised that it would be helpful for an agreement to be made as soon as possible.

Submission

The Applicant confirmed that it intends to submit the application in Q3 2024, and that it will submit the GIS shapefile within the required timescales prior to submission.

The Applicant asked for the Inspectorate's advice regarding possible venues for examination events. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to prepare a list of potentially suitable venues, and if the DCO application is accepted for examination, further discussions on this matter will take place.

AOB

The Inspectorate asked whether the Applicant will include a HRA derogation case, following discussions at the previous meeting. The Applicant explained that it has been advised by Natural England to submit more information, which it is in the process of doing. However, the Applicant does not intend on submitting a derogation case with the application. Both parties agreed that the evidence to support this position would need to be set out in their information to inform the Appropriate Assessment.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate will provide advice regarding how to complete the application form with two applicants.
- The Inspectorate will confirm which chart data should be used for DMLs.